

Message Text

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ACTION PM-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 MC-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 DODE-00 RSR-01 EUR-25 SS-15 NSC-10 L-03 AID-20

IGA-02 /109 W

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R 171200 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3917
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
USMTM DHRAHRAN

CONFIDENTIAL 2048

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SA, IT
SUBJECT: SALE OF MINIGUNS

REF: A. STATE 85247; B. STATE 93313

1. USMTM REPORTS IT UNABLE CONFIRM THAT MINDEFENSE HAS ASKED AGUSTA BELL TO INSTALL MINITAT OR MINIGUN SYSTEMS ; HOWEVER, USMTM ADVISERS REPORT RSAF IS INDEED INTERESTED IN OBTAINING THESE SYSTEMS FOR ITS HELICOPTER FLEET.

2. SAUDI DEFENSE AND MILITARY CONCERN HAVE, WE KNOW, RECENTLY BEEN HEIGHTENED BY EVENTS ON SAUDI- PDRY BORDER AND BY NEW SIGNS OF IRAQI AGGRESSIVENESS. STRENGTHENING OVERALL CAPABILITIES OF SAUDI HELICOPTER FORCE BY ADDITIONAL THESE WEAPONS SEEMS TO US JUSTIFIED BY CURRENT STATUS OF FOREIGN MILITARY THREAT TO SAUDI ARABIA. IF USG WERE TO REFUSE, SAUDIS MIGHT BE CHAGRINED AND ANNOYED ON LATER LEARNING THESE WEAPONS HAD BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO IRAN. IN MILITARY TERMS, AT LEAST, GIVING THESE GUNS TO SAUDI ARABIA BUT WITHHOLDING THEM FROM ISRAEL WOULD BE OF LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE.

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3. USMTM BELIEVES NEITHER RSAF NOR ITALIAN CONTRACTOR PRESENTLY PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR AGUSTA BELL HELICOPTERS IS PRESENTLY CAPABLE OF MAINTAINING SOPHISTICATED MINIGUN SYSTEMS. SAG ACCORDINGLY WOULD NEED CONTRACT WITH US

SUPPLIER FOR CURRENT MAINTENANCE AND AND LONG- TERM MAINTENANCE TRAININING. INDEED, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SALE SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED UNLESS CONTRACTOR MAINTENANCE AND TRAINING RESPONSIBILITY IS BUILT INTO CONTRACT.

4. WE RECOGNIZE THAT AEROMARITIME REPS MAY HAVE PICKED UP A FEW HINTS FROM SAUDIS TO LAUNCH A FISHING EXPEDITION AND, IN THAT ROLE, WE DO NOT SUGGEST THEY BE GIVEN MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT, WHICH IF WE TURN DOWN AEROMARITIME, MAY PUSH SUCCESSFULLY FOR SALE. WE SUGGEST, THEREFORE, THAT USMTM ADVISORS BE AUTHORIZED MAKE A FEW DISCREET INQUIRIES TO TEST WHETHER RSAF IS IN FACT SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING MINIGUN PURCHASE. (WE ARE SOMEWHAT SURPRISED USMTM HAS NOT ALREADY BEEN INFORMED IF SAUDIS INDEED INTERESTED.)

THACHER

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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30 JUN 2005

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